

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of producing an aerated milk product, comprising the steps of:
  - A. providing a milk blend comprising a milk ingredient and a hydrated emulsifier ingredient comprising:
    - a. about 0.5% to 1.5% wetting agent;
    - b. about 7% to 15% lactylated mono- and di-glycerides;
    - c. balance water;
  - 10       said milk blend having a temperature of about 4°C to 30°C and an initial density of at least 1.1 g/cc;
  - B. aerating the milk blend to an aerated density of about 0.56 g/cc to 0.9 g/cc to form an aerated milk product;
  - C. cooling said aerated milk product to a temperature of
    - 15       about 0°C to 5°C to form a cooled aerated milk product.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the aerated milk product forming step B comprises the sub-step of:
  - a. admixing a gas with the milk blend;
  - 20       b. aerating the gas and milk blend to form an aerated milk product.
3. The method of claim 2 wherein the gas of step A is selected from the group consisting of air, carbon dioxide, nitrogen, nitrous oxide, and mixtures thereof.
- 25 4. The method of claim 1 wherein the milk blend of step A has a temperature of 4°C to 10°C.
5. The method of claim 1 wherein the milk blend of step A has a temperature of 4°C to 7°C.
6. The method of claim 1 wherein at least a portion of the
  - 30       milk ingredient is fermented.
7. The method of claim 6 wherein at least a portion of the fermented milk ingredient is yogurt.
8. The method of claim 1 wherein the aerated milk is at a finished pH of 4.4 to 4.8.

0966849-092804

9. The method of claim 1 wherein the hydrated emulsifier is at temperature of 4°C to 7°C.
10. The method of claim 1 wherein the hydrated emulsifier blend of step A is admixed at a temperature of 4°C to 10°C.
11. The method of claim 1 wherein the hydrated emulsifier blend of step A is admixed at a temperature of 4°C to 7°C.
12. The method of claim 7 wherein the hydrated emulsifier of step A is added to the milk ingredient pre-fermentation.
13. The method of claim 7 wherein the hydrated emulsifier of step A is added to the milk ingredient post fermentation.
14. The method of claim 1 wherein the wetting agent is selected from the group consisting of polysorbates, propylene glycol esters, sodium dodecyl sulphate, sodium stearyl lactylate, and mixtures thereof.
15. The method of claim 1 wherein the wetting agent comprises sodium stearyl lactylate.
16. The method of claim 1 wherein the lactylated blend of mono- and di-glycerides is selected from the group consisting of lactylated mono- and di-glycerides, citrate acid esters of mono- and di-glycerides; and distilled monoglycerides.
17. The method of claim 1 wherein the viscosity of the milk blend in step A is at least 6000 cps.
18. The method of claim 1 wherein the aerated milk product has an aerated density of about 0.70 g/cc to 0.80 g/cc.
19. The method of claim 1 wherein the aerated milk product has an aerated density of about 0.75 g/cc.
20. The method of claim 1 additionally comprising the step of:  
maintaining the cooled aerated yogurt product at refrigeration temperature through distribution and retail sale.

F08260" 64899660

21. The aerated milk product prepared in accordance with the process of claim 6.
22. The aerated fermented milk product prepared in accordance with the process of claim 1.
- 5 23. The aerated yogurt product prepared in accordance with the process of claim 16.
- ~~24.~~ A low density aerated milk composition which retains an aerated texture for an extended shelf life, comprising:
- 10 A. about 85% to 95% of a milk ingredient;
- B. about 5% to 15% of a hydrated emulsifier blend; and
- C. an aerating gas;
- wherein the aerated milk composition has a finished density of about 0.56 g/cc to 1.0 g/cc.
- 15 25. The composition of claim 24 wherein the milk ingredient of step A is a milk blend that comprises:
- a. about 6% to 24% milk solids;
- b. about 0% to 10% fat;
- c. about 0% to 20% sugar;
- d. about 0.5% to 2% starch;
- 20 e. about 0.5% to 1.5% gelatin; and
- f. a starter culture.
26. The composition of claim 25 wherein the gelatin is selected from the group consisting of bovine, porcine, piscine and mixtures thereof.
- 25 27. The composition of claim 26 wherein the bloom strength of the gelatin is about 200 to 250.
28. The composition of claim 26 wherein the bloom strength of the gelatin is about 230.
29. The composition of claim 24 wherein the finished density
- 30 is about 0.70 g/cc to 0.80 g/cc.
30. The composition of claim 24 wherein the finished density is 0.75 g/cc.
31. The composition of claim 25 comprising about 2% to 4% fat and wherein the fat is a dairy fat.

09966849 092801

32. The composition of claim 24 wherein the composition is refrigerated.
33. The composition of claim 24 additionally comprising a fruit prep.
- 5 34. The composition of claim 24 wherein a quantity is packaged in a coated paper cup.
35. The composition of claim 24 wherein a quantity is packaged in a plastic container.
36. The composition of claim 35 wherein the container is a plastic cup.
- 10 37. The composition of claim 35 wherein the container is a tube fabricated from a flexible film.
38. The composition of claim 35 wherein the tube is fabricated from a flexible film contains about 50 to 100 cc.
- 15 39. The composition of claim 25 wherein at least a portion of the milk ingredient is pasteurized bovine milk.
40. The composition of claim 39 wherein the gas is nitrogen.
41. The composition of claim 39 wherein the fat content is less than about 10%.
- 20 42. The composition of claim 39 maintained at refrigerator temperatures.
43. The composition of claim 42 having a viscosity of about 52,000 to 55,000cps.
- 25 44. The composition of claim 43 having a fat content of about 1% to 5% and wherein the milk ingredient is a stirred style yogurt having a pH of about 4.3 to 4.7.

T08260-64899660